**24**. Multiple clusters according to claim **23**, wherein any virtual line exchange can assign virtual channels to a corresponding network circuit switching module only from its assigned group of virtual channels.

**25**. Multiple clusters according to claim **22**, wherein the front-end multimedia messaging exchange specifies the channel cross-connect signals for the respective subscribers identified by the subscriber list information.

**26**. Multiple clusters according to claim **20**, wherein each network circuit switching module is a standard multimedia channel interface software module employed in a stand-alone operation of the corresponding back-end multimedia messaging exchange.

**27**. Multiple clusters according to claim **18**, wherein the plurality of back-end exchanges provide the multimedia messages to the first and second network exchanges via standard multimedia interfaces.

**28**. Multiple clusters according to claim **22**, wherein the first and second front-end multimedia messaging exchanges

further include a controller for establishing hunt groups for forwarding messages to appropriate ones of the plurality of back-end multimedia messaging exchanges based on the subscriber list information.

**29**. Multiple clusters according to claim **18**, wherein the plurality of back-end multimedia messaging exchanges communicate the multimedia messages to the network exchange over voice trunks identified by virtual channels issued only by the first and second redundant front-end multimedia messaging exchanges and not by the first and second network exchanges.

**30**. Multiple clusters according to claim **27**, wherein each back-end exchange includes mutually exclusive corresponding multimedia interfaces connected by voice trunks to the first and second network exchanges.

* * * * *